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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM Crossfire

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SUBJECT Blunders in Foreign Policy

BERNARD SHAW: From Washington, Crossfire. Tonight, blunders in foreign policy.

The hosts for Crossfire: on the left, Tom Braden; on the right, in Chicago, Pat Buchanan. In the crossfire, Jonathan Kwitny, author of Endless Enemies: The Making of an Unfriendly World.

TOM BRADEN: Let's take a look tonight at the U.S. foreign policy which Mondale and Reagan debated on Sunday. Why do we always seem to intervene on the wrong side, the side the people hate? The people hated the Shah. We supported him. The people hate Marcos. We support him. We sent our Marines into Lebanon to aid a government the people would not sustain. Tonight is the anniversary of the murder of those troops. And day after tomorrow is another anniversary, the invasion of Grenada.

Our guest tonight, in his new book Endless Enemies, says Grenada was a unique success, but only because it was a mistake.

Pat, maybe you'll ask him to explain that.

PAT BUCHANAN: Let me ask you this, Jonathan Kwitny, first off. According to one review in a conservative publication, you said American foreign policy is marked by lies, corruption, murder, and support for oppressive policies. Do you think the United States is a malevolent force in the world?

JONATHAN KWITNY: Well, sometimes it is, sometimes it isn't. I think the United States has come up with the best way

2

of organizing an economy and a body politic, of developing a wonderful system for our own people to live under. And to the extent we can spread that, I think we're doing wonderful things. The problem is...

BUCHANAN: We're talking about American foreign policy. What do you think? Has it been a beneficent, a benevolent force or a malevolent force in the world in the postwar era?

KWITNY: It's accomplished a lot of both. It hasn't been nearly as benevolent as it could have been, and I wish it was.

BUCHANAN: Well, let me ask you this. Fidel Castro. You've compared him with Lech Walesa. You said both have faith in a utopian society. They bring their people independence.

KWITNY: Utopian socialist society.

BUCHANAN: Socialism, right. "hey have staggering physical and moral courage which allows them to wake up every day staring at death and spitting at it in defiance of principle."

Why don't you tell our audience what you find so admirable about Fidel Castro? Especially our Miami audience.

KWITNY: The most important thing that I think they have in common is that they're trying to lead a people who have been dominated by a large power next to them into a truly independent situation. Castro has accomplished that. Walesa has not yet.

BUCHANAN: Wait a minute. Let me contradict you. Fidel Castro is far more dependent upon the Soviet Union, Cuba is now, in terms of its oil supplies and the rest of it, than it ever was upon the United States. Do you really think the Cubans have achieved a measure of independence you would like to see other countries achieve, under Castro?

KWITNY: Well, they certainly haven't achieved the form of government that I'd like to see other countries achieve, but they have achieved an independence. And the fact is that they're using the Soviet Union tremendously for the benefit of the Cuban people. They're getting \$4 1/2 billion a year, or so, pumped into that economy, which is \$2500 for every Cuban family. This is what the Cuban economy is depending on, and it's doing very well with it, not the socialist system...

BUCHANAN: Well, how can you call it independence?

BRADEN: Pat, let me interject just a moment on this same subject.

You say the things that Mr. Buchanan says you say about Cuba. And you point out that we have made a lot of mistakes. We've made an enemy, and in a sense that helps Castro.

But listen to this. Wouldn't Cuba, under Castro, be an enemy anyhow, no matter what we did?

KWITNY: Well, not an enemy. Not a threat, certainly not to us. It's not strong enough to be a threat. I think he would like to be a trading partner.

BRADEN: Wouldn't it be unfriendly to us? Given that Castro is a communist, wouldn't it be unfriendly to us, no matter what we did?

KWITNY: No. As a matter of fact, it's pure speculation what would have happened if. But I think if we would have taken a hands-off attitude toward Castro in the initial days and not provided them with the enemy he needed and played us into being, that he might not have survived at all the economic disasters of the mid-1960s. And if he had survived them -- he might have been clever enough to do it, but he would have had to change the system there, and we would have had a government we would be much more comfortable dealing with.

BUCHANAN: But Jonathan Kwitny, look, Castro has provided his people what might be called kennel rights, the rights you provide your pet. You feed it, you give it medical care, you make sure it's got a yard to run around in. He denies it human rights, political rights, economic rights, and religious freedom.

Why should we even want to be a friend of a creature like that, who resembles, I guess, Mussolini as much as anybody in the modern world?

KWITNY: Why should we want to be a friend of the governments in El Salvador and Guatemala, that have provided a lot less for their people and have provided -- I've been through Cuba and I've been through El Salvador. I've spent several weeks in those countries. And I agree with everything you said in your description of Cuba. And yet if I had to choose, and I think if most Americans had to choose, whether to be an average Cuban or an average Salvadoran right now, they'd prefer to be an average Cuban, simply because you can go to bed at night and have some trust you're going to be able to wake up in the morning in one piece.

BUCHANAN: How can you make a statement like that, Mr. Kwitny, when for three days Castro opened up his country and 120,000 people, one percent of his country, fled in three days 20

years after his revolution succeeded?

KWITNY: If you opened up the borders of El Salvador or Guatemala right now, or most countries of Central or South America, you'd see a desertion that would dwarf that.

BUCHANAN: Well, come on. Guatemala's borders are not all shut with Mexico.

KWITNY: Well, because we don't open our borders. We're not taking those people in, as we did with the Cubans. If we gave passports, if we gave visas, gee whiz...

BRADEN: Let me get back to this debate for a moment. And it seems to me on target with what you're asking Mr. Kwitny.

The President said in Sunday's debate that there is every indication, Mr. Kwitny, every indication that if Marcos were to fall in the Philippines, there would be a communist government. Now, should we all believe this?

KWITNY: Well, you're asking me to be a prophet.

BRADEN: Well, I know. But it's part -- you say that we are conducting a foreign policy where we support these tinhorn dictators because we're afraid that we'll get communism if they fall.

KWITNY: Well, but exactly the opposite takes place. I was just going to say that if they wind up with a communist government, it will be directly because of the actions the United States has been taking for the past 20 years, when we have given them a socialist dictatorship and helped take away the free enterprise and democratic society we helped give them in previous years.

BUCHANAN: Mr. Kwitny, wait a minute now, please. Look, the Philippines. We did not call Marcos on the phone and say, "Cease being a democratically-elected president and establish yourself as a dictator for life." These things occur all over the Third World. The United States, as a great power, has got to deal with the reality that Marcos, dictator, controls the Philippines.

Now, what bothers a lot of conservatives is this: that liberals will say, look, the Shah is a bad man, the Shah is repressive, the Shah is this and that. So the United States pulls the rug out from under him. The situation is far worse when somebody else takes over. Then the liberals wipe their hands of the situation and move on with their human rights program toward Guatemala or El Salvador, never taking

responsibility for what they helped accomplish.

KWITNY: But why does the other side take over? Marcos -- surely, we didn't ask Marcos to create this kind of society. But we allowed it and enabled it in order to get his cooperation, basically, with the Vietnam War, and continuing on with the bases we have over there, although there's no reason to believe that we couldn't have maintained that relationship without supporting the socialization of the Philippine economy and the making of a military dictatorship out of what had been a democracy.

BUCHANAN: Jonathan Kwitny, look, let's take World War II. Now, Americans didn't like Stalin. We were in a very serious war at that time. So the United States said, look, this is one enemy we've got in Germany. And the Soviet Union is a system we despise. They're fighting, they're providing millions of troops. We're going to give them all the help we can, no strings attached, no conditions, don't open up your labor camps.

We have to deal, in other words, with the world as you find it. The United States finds all over the Third World dictators, right-wing, left-wing. We've got...

KWITNY: Why are we only concerned with some of them? I mean we quite agree. The problem in World War II -- I mean in World War II we were faced with one threat to us, a country that had attacked our most important trading partners, was stealing the trading wealth of them, that was sinking our ships and bombed our territory in the Far East. Russia was not doing that.

BUCHANAN: Here's what the operative principle is to me. Why are we against Castro and in favor of El Salvador? Why are we [unintelligible] constructive engagement with South Africa and hostile toward Ethiopia? The reason is Castro and Ethiopia have aligned themselves with our major enemy, the Soviet Union. El Salvador and South Africa have aligned themselves with us. The same reason we supported Stalin in World War II with Lend-Lease.

In other words, the operative principle in foreign policy has got to be: Our friends might be bad, but we have to stay with our friends if we're going to survive in a hostile world.

Is that not a good principle to operate on?

KWITNY: No, it's certainly not. I mean, in the first place, the fact that they have allied with the Soviet Union is really in response to what would benefit them by creating an enemy in the United States and by attracting wealth from the Soviet Union.

As long as they're not a threat to us, to our free

6

trade, I think countries that we leave alone will tend to gravitate toward the productive economy...

BRADEN: Pat, we have to take a break. When we come back I'll explain to you that we have not allied ourselves with the majority of people in South Africa. But that will come right after this.

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BUCHANAN: Welcome back to Crossfire, where Tom Braden and I -- I'm in Chicago -- are interviewing, back in Washington, Jonathan Kwitny. He's a writer and a reporter and a correspondent for the Wall Street Journal. He's traveled all over the world. He's written a book called Endless Enemies, the thesis of which is that the United States has pretty much gone around the world making enemies for itself and we've been making enemies of people we didn't have to and we've been befriending the wrong people.

Jonathan Kwitny, not only does your editorial page think that Jonathan Kwitny is somewhat off the wall, from what it's written, but I guess Presidents from Roosevelt -- or Truman to Ike to Nixon to Ronald Reagan to Lyndon Johnson, Jack Kennedy all have pursued pretty much the same policy of containment of communist expansion. What makes them wrong and you right?

KWITNY: Well, look where the policy has led for the past 35 years. We have wound up facing a constant flow of enemies. We're at war one day in Chad, the next day in Zaire, the next day in Lebanon, and never successfully, never defending the things we should and could stand for to help make this a better world, and in our own self-interest.

BRADEN: Pat, let me call your attention to the fact that within the next couple of days we're going to -- the Republican Party, chiefly, is going to put on a massive celebration of what happened in Grenada. Now, Mr. Kwitny says in his book that that was -- that the Grenada invasion was a success because it was a mistake.

Will you explain that?

KWITNY: I'm not sure I said exactly that. But I think it was an anomaly. It was a unique situation, maybe the first time since D-Day, or since Korea where we went into a country on the side of -- in a way that the people in that country would have supported, because we were opposing a terrible government that had the population in terror. But I don't think -- obviously, there are a lot of other terrible governments in the world, and we can't go around overthrowing them all. We could in this case because it's a tiny island.

7

BRADEN: Do you think President Reagan is putting on, that the Administration is putting on this celebration, and do you think the invaded Grenada because they needed a foreign policy victory?

KWITNY: Oh, yeah. I think, very clearly. They had promised some kind of victory against communism four years ago. I think they thought they were going to win it in Central America. I think they thought that was going to be easy. It didn't turn out to be. And this was something they could do.

BUCHANAN: Let me ask Jonathan Kwitny, and let me preface it with this. Do you think communism is an evil system? And the reason I ask that question is the United States fought, between Korea and now, in Vietnam. Now, whether you agree with the wisdom of going in, the United States lost 50,000 lives trying to prevent the kind of horror that was produced in Cambodia and the kind of all-out oppression and denial of rights that now exists in South Vietnam. Now, let's not argue about the merits of whether we should have gone in. But was that...

KWITNY: Why not?

BUCHANAN: ...not noble in purpose? I mean the purpose of it seems to be noble. Whether you could have succeeded or not is one thing or another.

All right. Go ahead and talk about...

KWITNY: Communism certainly is an evil system. But I think the example you just chose, Vietnam, is as good an example as you can find of what's been wrong with our policy. Here, for all these years we've lost all these lives, we spent billions and billions of dollars, which I think is still affecting our economy. And what was the reason for this? We were told over and over that it was in order not to save Vietnam, which was a small and not-that-significant a country, not to save democracy in any of the Indochinese countries, because they were all run miserably. It was to stop the falling dominoes. It was to protect Indonesia. It was to protect Thailand and Burma, ultimately Australia and Japan and Taiwan.

And what happened? As soon as we lose that war, as soon as we go home, pull up stakes, the very countries that supposedly were going to fall like dominoes -- and I left out Malaysia, Singapore -- all these countries were within two years labeled by the World Bank the leading economic growth area in the world. They were...

BUCHANAN: Mr. Kwitny.

KWITNY: They were stronger, more free enterprise, more

8

democratic.

BUCHANAN: You're getting at the point. Was the right side to be on the communist side in Vietnam? You keep saying we're on the wrong side.

KWITNY: No.

BUCHANAN: Should we have been on Ho Chi Minh's side?

KWITNY: The point is to change that paradigm. Not to say which side should we be on, but should we back factions in local disputes? The answer is no. We should support...

BRADEN: What should we do today at the United Nations, Pat? Today at the United Nations the Security Council voted unanimously, except for one vote -- the United States abstained in a demand that South Africa end apartheid. Where does that put us?

BUCHANAN: Are you asking me? I'd tell the U.N. --well, I would use impolite language and tell the U.N. the United States should not interfere in the internal affairs of the South African government in concert with the United Nations. We should deal with them the same way we've been dealing with them.

Tom, take a look at...

BRADEN: We should deal with them the same way Mr. Kwitny suggests you deal with them: Stay out of it.

KWITNY: No, not stay out of it morally. Stay out of it militarily. And those are two very different things. I think we need to use our moral force. And by going in militarily, we expend and waste and lose that moral force.

In South Africa, what we're doing is the only thing we could do that would sabotage our true interest there, which is to be able to trade with those people, to be able to buy the goods we need and sell the products we make on the free market, and, in addition, to try to promote the ideals we have. We're losing our ability to do that by creating enemies out of the people who will inevitably run that country, the majority of that country, just as we did in Iran and cost ourselves Iranian oil.

BUCHANAN: Let me respond to that, Tom. Look, Bishop Tutu got the Nobel Prize. He flew to South Africa. He got off the plane. Thousands greeted him. They were protected by South African police. He endorsed the African National Congress call to overthrow the government. He went back to a church, he preached, denounced the government.



Solzhenitsyn could not get the Nobel Prize and go back to the Soviet Union and do that. You couldn't go back to Cuba and do something like that.

South Africa is not the best situation in the world. It is one of the better ones in Africa. And all I suggest is, in part, that the United States should work with them because they are not hostile to the United States.

BRADEN: They are not hostile. You mean the government.

BUCHANAN: The government. The government is not hostile. The people are not.

BRADEN: But we are making the people hostile.

BUCHANAN: Well, I disagree with you.

KWITNY: Wait a minute. You disagree that our actions are creating -- making us an enemy of the majority of people in South Africa who want to, and someday will, rule their own country?

BUCHANAN: You know, I'm surprised Mr. Kwitny. You're tremendously concerned about the political rights of blacks in South Africa. But the political rights of Cubans in Cuba are of no interest to you.

KWITNY: That's nonsense. And I've written extensively about the political -- the political repression in Cuba.

BUCHANAN: How could you deliver that kind of tribute to Fidel Castro if you're concerned about political and human rights in Cuba? Even your own newspaper said that Jonathan Kwitny might be a bit naive, in so many words. Is that not correct?

KWITNY: I don't know what article you're talking about.

BUCHANAN: Editorial, on the editorial page of the Wall Street Journal.

KWITNY: There was a book review. I don't remember that it said that. It may have.

BUCHANAN: When you went down to Cuba, I'm referring to, and came back and wrote a report. Did not an editorial in the Wall Street Journal say you might learn by reading our letters to the editor?

KWITNY: No, I don't remember reading an editorial like that.

10

BRADEN: Well, let's not dispute a disputable point.

Let me go back to Iran for just a minute. Granted that we -- and you describe in your book in great detail the graft that was in Iran, the amount of dough that the Shah was putting in his pockets, and his family, and the U.S. contractors were putting money in their pockets. But even with all this, why did we have to wind up with the Ayatollah?

KWITNY: Well, I think that was because we had made ourselves the great enemy of the Iranian people by bringing the Shah in in the first place. And that's a fascinating story and one to which I devote a couple of chapters in Endless Enemies. Because what happened was that a couple of major oil companies got ahold of their former lawyers, who happened to be running the State Department and the CIA at the time, and arranged for us to overthrow the only democratically-elected, or close to it, prime minister, leader in the history of Iran, Mossadegh, who merely wanted to open the oil market to price competition, something that would have been greatly in the interests of the American public. It would have lowered oil prices here. In order to protect a cartel, a monopoly that Exxon and Mobil had on rights to buy and market that oil, we went in, we overthrew their democratically-chosen government, which was anti-communist. He had chased the Soviets out of that country.

BRADEN: Okay.

KWITNY: And brought in a repressive Shah and gave him the tools he needed to repress the population. Now we're supposed to...

BRADEN: All right, Jonathan Kwitny of the Wall Street Journal. I'm sorry, we're out of time.

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BRADEN: Okay, Patrick. Why is it that you constantly defend every dictatorship you can find around the world, and why is it that you constantly say that if we don't defend them, we'll have communism?

BUCHANAN: I don't defend dictators, Tom. I'd like to see the Chinese dictatorship overthrown on the mainland of China.

If it's a choice between democracy and dictatorship, it is democracy every time, as Jack Kennedy said. But our choice is often between a right-wing dictator and a communist regime, which is far worse for its people, far worse for us. In that case, we've got to take the lesser of two evils. It's the real world.

11

BRADEN: So three cheers for Mr. Marcos. Is that your point?

BUCHANAN: No. One cheer for Mr. Marcos, in preference to what's the alternative.

BRADEN: Okay.